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Transnational Ghadr Movement:

A Diasporic Dimension

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Introduction

The narratives of India's national struggle for independence focus mainly on the mainstream internal efforts of natives of the subcontinent. Indian scholars have largely reiterated the role of revolutionaries in foreign lands, however, with an India-centric dialogue. While they do broadly accommodate the role played by Indian freedom fighters beyond the boundaries of British India, they do perhaps tend to be partial and limited. Indeed, inclusive in the narratives is an international arena serving as a backdrop to plot the multiple locations on a global map where actors championed their anti-colonial cause. Moreover, probably not surprisingly, although this viewpoint explains the extensive reach of the independence movement as a whole it is inconsiderate in incorporating the transnational dimension. Specifically scholarship of the *Ghadr movement* is a classic example that has fallen prey to such marginality.

Almost every piece of work on Indian revolutionaries away from their ancestral home discusses the *Ghadr movement* in the US, the conspiracy theory of the Indo-German collaboration, or the radical Indo-Irish connections on American soil. Some Indian works provide compelling evidential source of foundation for tracing the Indian revolutionary movement beyond Indian boundaries.¹⁾ They have underplayed the diasporic contribution toward the independence movement, by treating actors as mere Indian expatriates who had left Indian shores rather than viewing them as a part of a proactive community in their adopted homes.

This paper argues that the transnational dimension to India's freedom struggle especially visible in the *Ghadr movement* provides a better understanding of why and how revolutionaries successfully channelized a multifaceted movement in adopted lands. In doing so, this paper aims at widening contexts such as the adversary British point of view, Indian-German collaboration, Indo-Irish connections, Anglo-American perspectives that are within confined spatial territories. Further, this paper illustrates how the employment of the concept 'international' in itself has been

problematic thus limiting the scope of study.

This paper specifically looks at three decades after the year 1905. The year 1905 is very significant since it marked the emphatic defeat of the gigantic Russian Empire in the straits of Tsushima at the hands of a small country like Japan. Moreover, being the first known Asian triumph over a European imperial nation, this landmark event had fired the imagination of the whole world, especially the people of India. After the disappointment of the Indian Revolt of 1857, the Japanese victory had finally opened the doors to hope for several Indians. Moreover a brief look at the historiography of the *Ghadr movement* will highlight previous research and its scope.

I: Historiography of the Ghadr Movement

Historiography of the *Hindu-German Conspiracy* and the *Ghadr movement* from various historians has provided for a broad range of reasoning and intellectual thinking. For instance, research on the *Ghadr movement* has been done using frameworks such as immigration and settlements of Sikhs in North America and Canada, *Indo-German Conspiracy* or *Hindu-German Conspiracy*, sequel to the 1857 war of Independence and its failure. As scholars explored to research and trace the immigration of South Asians in North America in the early years of the last century sub-topics such as the revolutionary *Ghadr movement* or the *Komagata Maru affair* that challenged prevalent racist policies were raised. Although the subject of emigrant Indians' struggle for independence beyond the borders of their homeland has not been widely studied a few scholars have done generous research.

Giles T. Brown who in his 1948 essay titled *The Hindu Conspiracy 1914-1917*, pointed out that the *Hindu-German Conspiracy* of the *Ghadrites* was unveiled with the event of US jumping into World War I and thus marginalizing the contemporary historical study (299-310). American scholar Mark Juergensmeyer noted that there were few scholarly accounts of the *Ghadr party* in the US. Building on the work of Giles T. Brown, Juergensmeyer stressed that since the movement itself originated on American soil, it is vital to the history of the struggle of the Indian immigrant community as an ethnic minority of the US.

Jurgensmeyer further stressing the inception of the newspaper *Ghadr* and the scope of activities of the *Ghadrites* in US, conveyed that the *Ghadr movement* should be examined from an interconnected domestic perspective in North America as well as in an international context through the support of Imperial Germany. *Ghadr* literature from the American soil through the manifestation of militant ideas and a strong nationalist fervent for a free homeland transformed the activities of the locals into an evolutionary Indian independence movement.²⁾

As is evident from the title "The Hindu Conspiracy in Anglo-American Relations during World

War I” historian Don Dignan after almost two decades claimed that the conspiracy should not be viewed in the context of the East Indians and the German interest alone but in the wider Anglo-American context. Dignan also stated that all the previous works, including that of Giles Brown suffered from the unavailability of confidential British documents, which under Britain’s fifty-year rule were forbidden to scholars for reasons of legality, privacy, and security. Dignan, with the scrutiny of the conspiracy highlighted that historians were unaware that the British attached great significance to the activities of Indian nationalists in the US. He claimed that the Whitehall documents particularly the despatches of its ambassador in the US, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice pressurized the White House to make a diplomatic issue out of the Indian conspiracies in the US (57-76).

In 1988, historian Joan M. Jensen produced an elaborate study of their religio-cultural and socio-political lives in her study *Passage from India: Asian Indian immigrants in North America*. Jensen too like her predecessors adopts a “continental” framework within the locus of area studies ultimately narrowing down the focus.

Justifications to the aforementioned shortcomings in the historiography of the *Ghadr movement* are not substantial without looking into the already existing network of Indians who contributed to the *Ghadr movement* directly or indirectly.

II: Indian Networks in Adopted Homes

It was a common practice for elite colonial British Indian students to engage in travel to Great Britain for the purpose of attaining higher education and gaining professional expertise and knowledge, which was only available at the heart of the Empire. It is said that from a mere handful in 1857 the number increased to 207 in the 1890s, and by the end of the first decade of the advent of the new century Indian students had made their presence to the tune of 700 people in British universities such as the Inner Temple an affiliate of London University, Trinity College Cambridge, Baliol College, Oxford, and University of Edinburgh. (Lal et al. 336) Moreover, including other groups, the total immigrant community from the Indian subcontinent estimated to approximately 70,000 by the year 1900 ³⁾ While it was the student fraternity that took the lead in the independence movement, from the aforesaid figures several well-known activists were born or influenced, leading to the birth of a new bundle who took part in the independence movement. Here it is safe to infer that among these groups were silent recipients and or active carriers of volumes of information vital to the independence movement. Further it is important to note that they did not live in a vacuum. Although they shared ethnic ties in their local communities, they also forged relationships besides their ethnic brethren. This supports the understanding that the

revolutionaries who identified with Indian independence movement for the sake of their ancestral home and participated in long-distance nationalism lived in a social field that included multiple social networks that were not alone ethnically based. Therefore the role played by the diasporic Indians or the transnational Indians was shaped by a variety of influences under a variety of circumstance and environments.

The above is evident in the case of the movement of political leaders to newer homes as and when the situation demanded. While the universities of Britain churned out several Indian scholars, they also ushered the rise of support structures catering them. Some were moderate like those who associated with the *East India Association* founded by a Bombay born businessman Dadabhai Navroji who had taken up the task of awakening consciousness of the British people about the need for India's political advancement. Some joined hands with a prominent Indian scholar and nationalist Shyamji Krishna Varma, an extreme radical who himself had struggled in London as a student and then founded the *India Home Rule Society* which published a penny monthly called the *Indian Socialist* from 1904 to 1907. Editing of the Journal was then continued from Paris with Shyamji's move until 1914. World War I ushered Shyamji to make another move to Geneva and was forced to abandon the publication. Once again Shyamji began publication of the journal in December 1920 until September 1922. *The Indian Socialist* according to its subtitle 'An Organ of Freedom, and of Political, Social, and Religious Reform' was inaugurated by Henry Meyers Hyndman, a prominent English Socialist and vocal supporter of Indian nationalism and independence from the British who was also a friend of Shyamji.

With London as a base several prominent Indian revolutionaries and nationalists actively gathered at the *India House* between 1905 and 1910. This Victorian mansion not only served the purpose of a gathering place for Indian students away from their ancestral home but also provided accommodation for about thirty students. Rather, this place was founded in the residence of none other than Shyamji in Highgate as a platform to promote Indian nationalism (Hopkirk⁴⁴, Emily Brown 21). Among other prominent revolutionaries who associated with the *India House* were V.D. Savarkar, M.P.T. Acharya, Madame Bhikaji Cama and Har Dayal.

As and when surveillance of the British got tough revolutionaries and political exiles moved undercover and for this purpose, they had established their network in other parts of the European continent as well. For instance, in 1905 Har Dayal moved to Paris along with Madam Cama and V.D. Savarkar and continued activities such as publishing nationalist pamphlets, books and journals.

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 created an express route to Europe from India shortening the travel time by several weeks. As a result, France too had begun attracting a considerable number of Indian students. It is said that in 1907 the British Director of Criminal

Intelligence (DCI henceforth) in London was preoccupied with the growing number of Indian students who had made France their *home away from home*. Besides the general envy of the British government towards the interest shown by Indian students in the French language and literature, the DCI's specific focus was the growing nationalist fervor among Indian students and the diplomatic nod extended by the French (Lal 351). A vital point to note here is that, it was none Har Dayal was nurtured into a revolutionary at the *India House* in London which he frequented during his student days and subsequently went on to gain prominence as a leader of the went on to of the Indian nationalist movement in North America. It can be seen that revolutionaries were well aware of their status and position in their homeland as well as in adopted homes. Actors chose to adapt to favorable places for safety of being and carrying out their activities while they lived their daily lives as businessmen, students or political reformers. In doing so they were supported by their community or well wishers. Another point to note here is the development of an intra continental network that became a part of the independence movement.

There also existed a visible population of Indians in Central Asia, Fiji (Lal 370-379) and South Africa, (Lal 242-246) that were within the influence of the Indian nationalist aspirations. South Africa as is well known became the springboard for M. K. Gandhi who is synonymous with Indian independence. While in South Africa Gandhi made efforts in cohesive bonding of the Indian community in order to protect their rights against discrimination by the British. However, Gandhi being the pacifist who propagated the mainstream non-violent movement after his return to India in 1915 does not fall within the parameters of our study.

Since North America was the home ground for the *Ghadr movement* this paper takes a more detailed look at the settlement of Indian immigrants there to facilitate the understanding of the social background of the actors involved. The North American continent saw the influx of cheap labor from India especially from the northern region of Punjab. The first wave of Indians had come to Canada in 1904, encouraged by the Hong Kong agents of the *Canadian Pacific Railway* (CPR), who were seeking to replace steering traffic lost after the Canadian government had raised the head tax on Chinese immigrants (Johnston 2). Besides employment in laying the tracks of the CPR, they became an easy replacement in industries such as mining and lumbering. Table 1 shows direct immigration to British Columbia, from India, both of which were a part of the British Empire.

Table 1: East Indian Immigration to Canada 1905-1914a

Year	Number	Year	Number
1905	45	1910	10
1906	387	1911	5
1907	2,124	1912	3
1908	2,623	1913	5
1909	6	1914	88

a (Garnered from Sushil K. Jain, "East Indians in Canada," The Hague: Research Group for European Migration Problems, Supplement 9, June 1971, p. 3.)

While most of the first wave of immigrants to Canada settled in Vancouver, the number of arrivals after the highest recorded between the years 1905 -1914 was 2,623 in the year, 1909 reduced drastically due to unfavorable racial tensions and tightened immigration restrictions. Owing to the availability of willing Asian immigrants who worked for longer hours at lower wages posed a direct threat to replace well deserving local white workers rapidly leaving them jobless. As a result, several Indians trickled down to the US in search of better opportunities and peaceful environs.

Another already existing sea route was from Calcutta to California passing through the Angel Island station including a refueling stop at Hong Kong. According to an exhibition catalogue published by the University of California, Berkeley, in the year 1899 roughly, two thousand Indians were in the US for the purpose of education or business. Having acquired scholarships from various Indian educational societies or self-funded students arrived in US in order to enroll in universities and colleges. Beginning from institutions such as the Cornell University in 1904 some joined University of California and by 1908, seventeen students were at Berkeley. Five others were studying at San Luis Obispo and three at the Mount Tamalpais Military Academy.

Table 2: East Indian Immigration to the United States 1898-1914b

Year	Number	Year	Number
1900	9	1908	1,710
1901	20	1909	337
1902	84	1910	1,782
1903	83	1911	517
1904	258	1912	165
1905	145	1913	188
1906	271	1914	172
1907	1,072	1915	82

b (U.S. Census, 1975:107-108. Garnered from Gonzales, "Asian Indian Immigration Patterns" 1986, p.42.)

Table 2 shows the immigration patterns for the years 1899-00 through 1913-1914. Further, the Indian immigration to the United States peaked during 1907-1908 and again in 1910, but the numbers were always small in comparison to East Asian immigration. Further, annually ten to

twenty women immigrated.

Meanwhile many of the Sikhs who had hopped over in search of newer opportunities in the US found better paying jobs in the lumber industries, while the Pacific Railways in areas of Washington and Oregon employed others. There were those who found work in the unskilled category as farm laborers in rice growing areas of Marysville and Yuba City to the fruit growing areas of the Sacramento Valley. Between the years, 1904 to 1923 over 10,000 Sikhs had settled in California alone (Tatla 54).

There was another stream of Indians seeking higher education and technical training and opportunities to pursue Religio-philosophical interests, which came via England and Europe. They were from middle class families of Bengal and other parts of India. Among the group of Indian immigrants to North America was a small sub section belonging to the category of political refugees. A broad playground was available to these potential political leaders and their recruits. Along with the Irish, Cubans, Mexicans, and Chinese the Indians found support and fertile grounds in North America for their revolutionary movements. The mingling of these non-ethnically based groups existed within a social field of interaction created links to the activities of the Indian independence movement.

As can be understood from the formation of a strongly networked Indian diaspora stretched across continents one can judge the volume and nature of radical activities and exchanges that took place. With this broad playground in mind this paper will observe the formation, scale and variety of operations of the *Ghadr movement*. Moreover, a closer look into the circulation of radical literature produced by the *Ghadrites* will illustrate their nationalistic fervor.

III: The Ghadr Movement and Circulation of Radical Literature

A former Government of India scholar at Saint John's College, Oxford University, Har Dayal as mentioned earlier was closely associated with the *India House* in London after its closure in 1910, was forced to leave Britain due to unfavorable circumstances. During his time in London he had met several activists and participated in meetings where proponents of Indian independence voiced their concerns. Laden with fervor of nationalism and determination he finally reached the US in June 1911 to continue his revolutionary work and in February 1912, was appointed lecturer of Indian Philosophy at Stanford University. However soon he had to resign in September for his involvement in revolutionary activities.

After this on March 13, 1913 Har Dayal convened a meeting of Indian representatives from different towns across the US at Astoria. There they formed a new organization or *Sabha* called the *Pacific Coast Hindustani Association*. The office, which was named *Yugantar Ashram*

(Advent of a New Age Hermitage), was located at 436 Hill Street, San Francisco. Later this association was renamed *Hindi Association of the Pacific Coast*. After laying the organizational base of the movement, Har Dayal accompanied by other members proceeded on oratory tours spanning the entire western part of the US. Har Dayal's dedication and eloquence soon activated the Indian community into a revolutionary body. Money and volunteers for a larger national cause began flowing in and, within a few months, its membership, in and outside the United States ran into thousands. Branches soon sprang up in most countries of East Asia. Then a second meeting of the association was convened at Sacramento in October 1913, where a weekly journal, named *Ghadr*, meaning 'Mutiny' (some translate it 'Revolution') under the editorship of Har Dayal was first published from University of California, Berkeley in San Francisco on November 13, 1913. This marked the beginning of the *Ghadr movement*.

The association invested in a printing press, which churned out the English and Urdu publication of the *Ghadr*. In the first issue, it clarified its purpose and Har Dayal bristled with hair-raising phrases: "Today there begins in foreign lands, but in our country's tongue, a war against the English Raj..." He wrote that their name and work was nothing but *Ghadr* translating 'Mutiny'. Further, "Where will the mutiny break out? In India..." and in a few years "it is important to make preparations for this rising." Har Dayal concluded, "The time is soon to come when rifle and blood will be used for pens and ink..."⁴⁾ With this appeal, the circulation of the newspaper soon gathered momentum and within a year, it came to be published in four languages: Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi and Gujarati. Occasionally the *Ghadr* published advertisements for recruitment that read: Wanted: Enthusiastic and heroic soldiers for organizing *Ghadr* Party in Hindustan; Remuneration: Death; Reward: Martyrdom; Pension: Freedom; Field of work: Hindustan.⁵⁾

Within eight months after Har Dayal's Astoria meeting on November 1, 1913, Hindu intellectuals, Sikh farmers, peasants, lumber workers, and students collectively identified with and came to be known as the *Ghadr Party*. The motive of the group was to carry out the creation of a politically institutionalized resistance to challenge colonialism and racism as well as to protect local Indian immigrants. Further Muslims and Hindus of the lower classes also were drawn to the group. Unlike other preceding organizations, which aimed at educating and informing the western world about the Indian cause, the *Ghadr Party* was the first revolutionary movement to be created outside India for fomenting a military uprising within India.

It was in the first decade of the twentieth century, a network of secret revolutionary societies spread across from Punjab and Bengal to Indian communities abroad, subsequent to which intelligence organizations to nail the activities of these so called seditionists were formed rapidly. Within a couple of years, the psychological base and organizational units were firmly established on which the *Ghadr movement* was built.

Har Dayal's activities, particularly his anarchist publications in the past were known to the intelligence agencies, which he had cleverly eluded until now. Nevertheless, this did not discourage the agents from establishing a case against Har Dayal. Brown writes: "Har Dayal had brought himself forcibly to the attention of the British officials when he arrived in Washington on February, 9, 1914, as a member of a delegation of Hindus to protest Congressional bills introduced by three Californian representatives... which would exclude the immigration of all Asiatics to the United States". A complaint against him was lodged by the First Secretary of the British Embassy, Earnest Scott that led to the issuance of an arrest warrant accusing Har Dayal "on charges of being a member of excluded classes, an anarchist or advocating the overthrow of the United States government by force."⁶⁾

This time Har Dayal did not escape and on March 25, 1914, he was arrested as an undesirable alien. He was arrested for a brief period and released on a bail of a thousand dollars on an assurance that he would appear again the next day for an interrogation. He appeared the next day and after a three-hour interrogation, he was free to go. However, his lawyer advised that neither the court nor the government could be trusted and hence if he wanted to leave the borders of US he should do so soon. Har Dayal followed this advice and proceeded to Switzerland.

The war between Germany and Britain broke out on August 4, 1914 and this provided an opportunity to join in against the Empire. German agents in the US extended their support to the Indians in the form of arms, financial assistance, and strategic advice. Har Dayal thought that the perfect time for a revolution in India had arrived and some desperate Indians found allegiance with the idea "the enemy of my enemy is my friend."

In the summer of 1914, the *Ghadrites* published their first collection of poetry entitled: *Ghadr di Goonj* (Echo of Revolt) simultaneously released in Urdu and Punjabi. In 1915, C.R. Cleveland the DCI describes a pamphlet in Gurumukhi of *Ghadr di Goonj* as:

The title page is decorated with the picture of a woman with disheveled hair standing on the map of India with a half-drawn sword in her hand... The pamphlet is described as the first of a series of books on mutiny printed at *Yugantar Ashram*, San Francisco. The whole pamphlet is in metrical form and is highly seditious.⁷⁾

The copy of the front page of a pamphlet revealing the above description is confirmed as shown in the figure that follows.



Figure A: Pamphlet of *Ghadr di Goonj*. Photo by Pallavi Bhatte, 2010. Original document preserved in the collection at Ghadr Memorial, San Francisco.

Besides *Ghadr di Goonj*, prominent among the other literatures of the *Ghadr Party* were several supplements such as *New Echo*, *Ghadar di Karak*, *Ghadar Sandesh*, and *Ilane-Jung*.⁸⁾ When the police raided the *Ghadr Party* headquarters in San Francisco on June 4, 1918 they found that one entire room was fully stacked with publications, numbering between 150,000 and 200,000.⁹⁾ The British had noticed that *Ghadr* literature was appearing at various places throughout the Empire some of which included Egypt, South Africa, Fiji, Canada, British East Africa, and British Guiana.¹⁰⁾ Drawing a broad range of nationalist, revolutionary movements to formulate its opposition to the Raj the *Ghadr* had a weekly print run of 25,000. “Branches of the *Ghadr Party* were opened in Hong Kong, Hankow, Tianjin, and Canton. There were some activities in Beijing as well.”¹¹⁾ The circulation of the paper widened and later was distributed to the Philippines, Fiji, Sumatra, Japan, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Hankow, Java, Singapore, Malaya, Siam, Burma, East Africa and of course India where the *Ghadrites* were preparing for a mass revolution to be carried out in India.

A publication of a monthly review called *The Independent Hindustan* deliberately published from the *Ghadr Party* headquarters dated May 1927 an article titled “The Story of the Hindustan Gadar Party” where it reminisced the First Ghadr, translating as First War of Independence of 1857 the anniversary of which coincided in the month of May. While appealing to the Indian audience it also shifts its focus on local Americans, especially the Irish Americans besides the Irish men in uniforms serving in India by mentioning that the *Ghadr movement* in India is very similar to the story of the *Sinn Fein* in Ireland¹²⁾ making direct connections with the Irish independence movement.

Besides forging translocal relationships the *Ghadrites* are also significantly known to have played a role in political issues concerning Indian immigrants in the North American continent. Any study on the *Ghadrmovement* is incomplete without a scrutiny of the *Komagata Maru Incident* in which the *Ghadrites* actively participated.

IV: The Komagata Maru Incident: A Catalyst

The ongoing immigration exodus to Canadian shores had already become a nagging concern for the Canadian immigration authorities as well as the British authorities. In the meanwhile, agents of Canadian companies in Hong Kong such as the CPR agents with a lucrative motive were actively inviting Indian laborers to immigrate to British Columbia. Under these circumstances, a Japanese ship, the *Komagata Maru*,¹³⁾ had been chartered by a well-to-do Sikh entrepreneur Gurdit Singh to carry three hundred and seventy-six Indian immigrants (of whom three hundred and forty-six were Sikhs, twenty-four were Muslims and twelve were Hindus) to British Columbia. He was well aware of the problems that Indians faced in getting to Canada due to exclusion laws. Gurdit Singh recorded in the ship's log as follows:

The reason which led me to this work is that when I came to Hong Kong in January of 1914, I could not bear the trouble of those who were in the Gurudwara waiting to go to Vancouver. They were waiting there for years...How tyrannical and hard was this on our brothers!...This affected my mind and I resolved to take them to Vancouver under any circumstance.¹⁴⁾

By 'under any circumstance' meant that, Gurdit Singh not only expected the repercussions but was determined to take that calculated risk which required an enormous effort and in this endeavor he was not alone. He sought the assistance of two Sikh youths Bir Singh¹⁵⁾ and Daljit Singh¹⁶⁾. Together "they organized a passenger's committee and, on Gurdit Singh's instructions, began corresponding with the *Khalsa Diwan Society* of Vancouver (Johnston 25)."¹⁷⁾

Further as Hugh Johnston elaborates that for Gurdit Singh, "it as an act of patriotism which, win or lose, would win him recognition among nationalists in India (25)." The stringent nature of the exclusion laws such as the Continuous Passage Act¹⁸⁾ aimed at restricting immigration specifically from India. Indians had to have at least two hundred dollars on person to enter British Columbia. The Federal government of Canada, in 1908, passed the "Continuous Passage Act,"¹⁹⁾ prohibiting immigration of persons who did not come from the country of their birth or citizenship by a 'continuous journey' and or through tickets purchased before leaving their country of birth or nationality.²⁰⁾ This disturbed the East Indian community especially because they being British

subjects were directly under the Crown yet were discriminated in another part of the same Empire.²¹⁾

For sixty days in 1914, a shipload of would be Indian immigrants was held just offshore by an angry province determined to deny entry. The passengers fought off police, struggled in the courts, gave up when menaced by the navy, but left behind a legacy of death.²²⁾

When the ship was on its way to Canada, the British press picked up the news, and a Vancouver newspaper *The Province*, published a news report under the headlines of "Boat loads of Hindus on Way to Vancouver" and "Hindu Invasion of Canada."

On May 31, 1914, Indians from various parts of British Columbia gathered at Dominion Hall, Vancouver. The *Khalsa Diwan Society* and the *United Indian League* took the role of organizing a 'Shore Committee' and they raised twenty-two thousand dollars to pay for the legal problems of the charter contract and to pay for legal defense of the victims. They collected money and supported the victims for their daily sustenance. Besides, it cost two hundred dollars a day to supply the victims with food and other necessities. Further the vessel had already incurred a debt of approximately eighteen thousand dollars.²³⁾

Simultaneously in a number of meetings held at revolutionary establishments in 1914, ranging from California to the Indian diaspora in other countries, prominent *Ghadrites* including Barkatullah, Tarak Nath Das, Har Dayal and Sohan Singh used the *Komagata Maru* incident as a rallying point for the *Ghadr Movement*, most notably in support of promulgating plans to coordinate a massive uprising in India. The Indians had realized that they could get together in a transnational space and create a revolution in India.

Although they retained a Vancouver lawyer, E. J. Bird as counsel, who represented them in judicial proceedings on their behalf,²⁴⁾ the passengers were not allowed to have personal contact with their lawyer and nor was Bird allowed to board the ship or have the slightest contact with Gurdit Singh.²⁵⁾ This exhibits the denial of adequate, timely, and effective legal representation. After admitting only 20 passengers, the *Komagata Maru* forcibly left the Victoria harbor and arrived in Calcutta on September 26, 1914. On arrival in Calcutta, at the Budge Budge harbor, there was a bloody riot-like situation with the British authorities who proceeded to arrest the so called agitators. Amidst the resistance a general riot ensued killing 19 passengers while some escaped others faced house arrest until the end of World War I.

The *Komagata Maru Incident* played a pivotal role in shaping the history of the Indians in the diaspora with reference to North America as well as the history of Indian Independence struggle of which radical revolutionaries in the diaspora form a part. In addition, it is important from the viewpoint of Asian American history and scholarship in the area of 'racial formation' in North America.

V: The Hindu-German Conspiracy and the East Indian Diaspora

British concerns over activities of Indian nationals in the United States directly affected the American policy towards the politicization of the East Indian diaspora. The pinnacle in the policy was the prosecution of Indian nationals conspiring to violate the neutrality laws of the United States. As mentioned by Matthew Plowman, the trial that took place in San Francisco from November 1917, to April 1918, was one of America's longest and most expensive one where a federal jury found twenty-nine defendants guilty of conspiring to violate the law prohibiting military enterprise against Britain with which the US was at peace.²⁶⁾ The US Attorney's investigation of this trial called it *The Hindu-German Conspiracy of World War I*, which involved Indian nationals and German consular officials throughout the United States and Asia. Wherein primary operations included attempts to ship arms from US ports to revolutionaries in India, and propaganda operations aimed at provoking mutiny among Indian soldiers in the British Army. According to the investigations, the Indians' aim was to end the British occupation of their homeland while the Germans, in an attempt to weaken their foe, funded members of the Indian independence movement. In this endeavor, both the Indians and the Germans were in contact with Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and Abinash Bhattacharya who had a solid revolutionary background in Berlin.²⁷⁾ Although Indians presented their position in consistency with the ideals of the American Revolution, they were unable to convince the American officials since the United States was a British ally and the Germans attacked the British through the Indians. Although the British authorities hoped that, the conviction of the Indians would result in their expulsion from the United States, a strong public support favoring the Indians dissuaded the U.S. Department of Justice from doing the same. However, this definitely affected the politicizing of the Asian Indian case.

Conclusion

Determining the protagonists of the freedom struggle and the passive actors that were available as a wide audience for propaganda of the Indian independence cause in the local North American context widens into the Indian diaspora in the larger transnational context. The struggle for settlement by the Indian immigrants in North America further clarifies how several ordinary labor class Indians, subject to racist immigration laws were motivated to join the clarion call of the radical Indian nationalists. Incorporating catalytic incidents, the birth of socio-religious organizations and the simultaneous creation of socio-political organizations along with the support of local Americans, illustrates the culmination of nationalistic fervor, a direct result of the

experiences in their new environment as well as the subjugated identity in their homeland. Tools such as propaganda used to channelize external forces gave the British nightmares; carved the identity of the Indian Diaspora and further accelerated the politicization of the diaspora itself. The Indian Independence struggle in the transnational space starts a new dialogue, which is not just restricted to domestic politics.

The arguments and the evidence provided in this paper answer the critical questions as to why and how the Ghadr movement was transnational in nature since the employment of the term 'international' is extremely narrow and restrictive considering the expanse of the scope of activities of the *Ghadrites*, their propaganda and network. The global nature of movement of resources, actors and information; and the extreme swiftness observed in being proactive to a dangerous situation in order to escape the eye of the enemy cannot be understood in a mere domestic or international playground. The diasporic communities served as important hubs of communication as well as nodal places where actors and activities moved in a touch and go operation.

Notes

- 1) Such as (A.C. Bose:1971) ; (G.S. Deol: 1969); (L.P. Mathur: 1970); (G.S. Sainsara, et al: 1961); (Khushwant Singh and Satindra Singh: 1966)
- 2) See Mark Juergensmeyer 1976; 1997.
- 3) Ansari, Humayun. *The Infidel within* 2004, 37.
- 4) Brown, "Har Dayal," 144-145.
- 5) Isemonger and Slattery, "An account of the Ghadr Conspiracy," viii.
- 6) Brown, "Har Dayal," 155.
- 7) Select Document Political A. June 1914, Nos. 110-111, 'Ghadar Di Gunj (Echo of Mutiny)' reproduced in Bose, A. C., "Passage from India," 97.
- 8) Mathur, "Indian Revolutionary Movement in the United States of America," 34. Also available for scrutiny in the Ghadar Memorial, San Francisco.
- 9) DCI's report of September 28, 1918, Home Political A, Proceedings, October 1918, Nos. 191-94, cited in Harish Puri, Ghadar Movement, p96.
- 10) Brown, "Har Dayal," 151.
- 11) B. R. Deepak, "India China Relations," 62.
- 12) Bishan Singh, "The Story of the Gadar Party," *The Independent Hindustan*. vol.1 No. 9 Hindustan Gadar Party (May. 1921), 4-6.
- 13) Komagata Maru was a cargo steamship that had been built in Glasgow in 1890 for a German company in Hamburg and registered under the name of SS 'Stubbenhak' and later renamed SS 'Sicilia'. It had passed through multiple hands of ownership and in 1913 was acquired by a Japanese company, Shinyei Kisen Goshi Kaisha of Kobe that gave it its new name. See Norway Heritage, First. Norway-Heritage: Hands Across the Sea, "S/S Stubbenhuk, Hamburg America Line." Last modified October 31, 2011. Accessed

October 30, 2011. http://www.norwayheritage.com/p_ship.asp?sh=stubb.

- 14) Singh, Gurdit. Voyage of the Komagata Maru," 20.
- 15) Bir Singh hailed from Amritsar and became his assistant secretary.
- 16) Daljit Singh hailed from Ferozepur and was formally the associate editor of a Sikh newspaper in Amritsar. He agreed to serve as Gurdit Singh's personal Secretary.
- 17) For the socio-religious support of the local Indian migrant community in Canada, the *Khalsa Diwan Society* began as a community gathering. It actually went on to take the shape of a political organ in 1907 in Vancouver as a collective voice against oppression caused by racism perpetrated by European labor unions.
- 18) Continuous Passage Act, 1908 enacted by the Government of Canada to control the 'Indian invasion' or the 'Hindu invasion'.
- 19) Also referred to as the Continuous Journey Regulation.
- 20) The Canadian Immigration requirement for *continuous journey* specified the requirement of every ship to arrive in Canada directly from its home port; this made it impossible for an Indian ship to dock in Canada, since a ship leaving distant India had to stop at a foreign port en route for refueling. In effect, this rule meant that no immigrants could conceivably come from India. Materials for this sketch were garnered from Nayar, *The Sikh Diaspora in Vancouver*," 17.
- 21) Although all British subjects were British citizens, there was a clear distinction between of British citizens having characteristics of 'Englishness' by ancestry and those that were not so.
- 22) Gurdit Singh "Voyage of the Komagata Maru," 10.
- 23) Waraich.
- 24) Johnston, "*The Voyage of the Komagata Maru*," 34.
- 25) Ibid. 40.
- 26) Plowman, "Irish Republicans and the Indo-German Conspiracy of World War I," 85.
- 27) Barooah, "Chatto," 39-54.

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